

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

Status of Claims

Claims 1-8 are currently pending. Claims 1-8 stand rejected.

Rejections

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP Patent Publication No. 09238423 of Sugiyama Shuichi (hereinafter referred to as “Shuichi”).

The Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner’s finding that the Shuichi obviates the present invention as claimed. The Applicants assert that Shuichi does not teach or suggest teach all of the limitations of claim 1. Specifically, Shuichi does not teach or suggest “an electrically insulating inner layer,” as required by claim 1. Instead, Shuichi teaches away from an electrically insulating inner layer. In particular, Shuichi teaches a contraction tube 30 having an outer layer 31, a middle lamella 32, and an inner layer 33. (see paragraph 11). Shuichi explains that each of these layers contains polyethylene and carbon black (see paragraph 11). Shuichi further explains that both the inner layer 33 and the outer layer 31 are semi-conductive, thereby teaching away from the requirement of the present invention that the inner layer be an insulating inner layer. Shuichi further explains that the conventional contraction tubes to be improved by the Shuichi device also include such a semi-conductive inner layer 3 for contacting conductors 2, where the semi-conductive inner layer 3 is separated from an external semi-conducting layer 5 by an insulator 4. (see paragraph 2 and Figure 3). Accordingly, the Applicants submit that claims 1-8 are in condition for allowance and request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claim Amendments

Claim 1 is hereby amended to address the Examiner's objection stating that the term "can" prevents a positive claim limitation. Claims 6 is also amended to correct a minor typographical error.

Conclusion

For all of the foregoing reasons and in view of the foregoing amendments, Applicants respectfully contend that the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request entry of the foregoing amendments, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-8, and issuance of a Patent for the subject invention. If the Examiner cares to discuss anything presented here to further prosecution of this application, he is invited to contact the undersigned Attorney for the Applicant. Please charge any additional requisite fees relating to this amendment and response to Deposit Account No. 501581.

Respectfully submitted,

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